

INTERNATIONAL SECURITY / MIDDLE EAST UPDATE
January 29 - February 4, 2010

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1. [Iran Urged to Inform U.N. Agency of Position on Nuclear Deal](#) (02-03-2010)

By Stephen Kaufman
Staff Writer

Washington — Iran needs to inform the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) on whether it has changed its position toward a proposed agreement that would enable it to have its uranium supply enriched for use in a Tehran medical research reactor, according to Assistant Secretary of State for Public Affairs P.J. Crowley.

Crowley spoke to reporters February 3, one day after Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad reportedly said his government has “no problem” with sending his country’s uranium outside Iran for enrichment. These developments come three months after the IAEA and the so-called P5+1 group of countries (Russia, China, France, the United Kingdom, Germany and the United States) [proposed a deal](#) that would provide Iran with enriched uranium for medical research while also ensuring the uranium would not be enriched to a level that could be used for nuclear weapons.

Crowley said it is “unclear” to what Ahmadinejad was referring February 2.

“To the extent that the president is offering a new perspective on the Tehran research reactor arrangement that was offered to Iran last fall in Geneva, you know, we will look forward to hearing about the Iranian position through the IAEA,” he said.

“If, as he suggested, Tehran is willing to move forward to accept the arrangement that has been offered ... this would be of benefit to the Iranian people; and it would clearly be welcome news,” Crowley said. “The real question is whether this represents a ‘yes’ and whether Tehran is willing to communicate that to the IAEA.”

Crowley also denied the Iranian leader’s February 2 assertion that there are negotiations occurring between the United States and Iran over the exchange of some prisoners.

“There are no negotiations taking place between the United States and Iran regarding a prisoner swap,” he said. The United States has repeatedly called on Iran to release U.S. citizens it holds in custody, including American hikers Sarah Shourd, Joshua Fattal and Shane Bauer, who were arrested near Iran’s border with Iraq in July 2009, as well as Iranian-Americans Reza Taghavi and Kian Tajbakhsh.

“We [also] remain concerned about the whereabouts of Robert Levinson, and have communicated that through a protecting power in Tehran repeatedly,” Crowley added.

The assistant secretary said that there are Iranian citizens being held in the United States and the Obama administration is “willing to entertain ... questions and facilitate consular access, if that’s what Iran desires.” However, he rejected the idea of an exchange, saying there is no equivalence between “an Iranian citizen who has been indicted and/or convicted of arms trafficking, in violation of ... international law, and three hikers who wandered across an unmarked border.”

If President Ahmadinejad is suggesting a willingness to “move forward and resolve the issues surrounding U.S. citizens in Iranian custody,” the United States would “obviously welcome ... that opportunity,” Crowley said. But “we’re not interested in a swap, per se.”

2. Energy Department on 2011 Nuclear Security Agenda (02-02-2010) **Nonproliferation spending would increase by 25 percent**

U.S. Department of Energy, National Nuclear Security Administration, February 1, 2010

FY2011 Budget Request a Critical Step toward Implementing President Obama’s Nuclear Security Vision

Request Seeks \$11.2 Billion to Manage the Stockpile, Secure Vulnerable Nuclear Material, Recapitalize Infrastructure, and Continue Cost-saving Management Reforms

WASHINGTON, DC – The President’s FY2011 Budget Request for the National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA), delivered to Congress this morning, highlights the critical role NNSA plays in implementing the nuclear security agenda President Obama outlined in his Prague speech last April and repeated in last week’s State of the Union address.

The \$11.2 billion request, up 13.4 percent from FY2010, makes much-needed investments in the infrastructure required to maintain the nuclear stockpile without nuclear testing, prevent nuclear

proliferation, power the nuclear Navy and provide the Nation with world class nuclear counterterrorism and emergency response tools.

“President Obama’s budget request is an historic step toward implementing his unprecedented nuclear security agenda and highlights the vital role NNSA plays in keeping the American people safe,” said NNSA Administrator Thomas D’Agostino. “It reflects the President’s commitment to managing the stockpile without nuclear testing, working with our international partners to secure vulnerable nuclear material around the world within four years, recapitalizing the nuclear security enterprise, strengthening our ability to recruit the next generation of nuclear security experts, and continuing the management reforms that enable us to be effective stewards of the taxpayers’ money.

“I applaud the President for his leadership on these issues and look forward to working with Congress to get this budget passed,” said D’Agostino.

The President’s budget request makes crucial investments in the infrastructure required to maintain a modern, sustainable nuclear security enterprise and strengthen our ability to recruit, train and retain the skilled people we need to maintain our nuclear capabilities.

It requests more than \$7 billion for the Weapons Activities appropriation, up \$624 million from FY2010. It includes more than \$2.0 billion for Stockpile Support activities (up \$405 million, or 25 percent); \$1.6 billion for Science, Technology and Engineering (up \$153 million, or 10.4 percent); and more than \$2.3 billion for Infrastructure (up \$102.6 million, or 4.7 percent) – including funding for major long-term construction projects to replace aging and expensive-to-maintain buildings that house critical capabilities for plutonium and uranium.

The President is also requesting close to \$2.7 billion for NNSA’s Defense Nuclear Nonproliferation program, a 25.8 percent increase over FY2010. This investment highlights the President’s commitment to securing all vulnerable nuclear material around the world within four years and NNSA’s crucial role in achieving that goal.

The Fissile Materials Disposition programs would increase by 47 percent – an increase of \$328.8 million – to continue construction of the Mixed Oxide Fuel Fabrication Facility and related facilities in support of U.S. plutonium disposition activities and includes the first \$100 million of a \$400 million U.S. commitment to support Russian plutonium disposition activities.

The budget requests \$225.3 million in additional funding for NNSA’s Global Threat Reduction Initiative (GTRI) – an increase of 67 percent – to accelerate the removal and disposition of high-priority vulnerable nuclear material overseas and convert additional HEU-fueled research reactors to the use of proliferation-resistant low enriched uranium fuel.

The budget request includes an \$18.1 million increase for the International Material Protection and Cooperation program to support additional nuclear security upgrades and to expand cooperation with countries outside of Russia and the former Soviet Union.

The President has also requested more than \$1 billion for NNSA’s Naval Reactors program, an increase of 13.3 percent, to support design and development work on the OHIO-class ballistic missile submarine replacement, the refueling of the S8G land-based nuclear prototype located in upstate New York, and NNSA’s efforts in support of recapitalization of the program’s spent nuclear fuel infrastructure.

Finally, the FY2011 budget request will position NNSA to continue to promote proactive, sound management reforms that save money, improve the way we do business, and make the enterprise more efficient. For example, NNSA's Defense Nuclear Security program has initiated a Zero-Based Security Review that will lead to efficiencies in our security program and help drive down costs while sustaining the core physical security capabilities at our sites.

Similarly, NNSA's Supply Chain Management Center has saved taxpayers tens of millions of dollars and helps create a 21st century procurement system. The President's budget request will enable NNSA to continue those reforms.

For a three-page summary of the Budget Request or to download the entire NNSA FY2011 Budget Request, visit http://nnsa.energy.gov/management/nnsa_budget.htm

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Established by Congress in 2000, NNSA is a semi-autonomous agency within the U.S. Department of Energy responsible for enhancing national security through the military application of nuclear science in the nation's national security enterprise. NNSA maintains and enhances the safety, security, reliability, and performance of the U.S. nuclear weapons stockpile without nuclear testing; reduces the global danger from weapons of mass destruction; provides the U.S. Navy with safe and effective nuclear propulsion; and responds to nuclear and radiological emergencies in the U.S. and abroad. Visit <http://www.nnsa.energy.gov/> for more information.

3. 2011 U.S. Budget Would Increase Security and Development Aid (02-01-2010)

By Stephen Kaufman
Staff Writer

Washington — When President Obama foreshadowed his budget priorities for the 2011 fiscal year, he stressed the importance of U.S. domestic concerns such as job creation, but he also said there would not be cuts to national security programs. The \$52.8 billion budget request for the State Department unveiled February 1 reflects a \$4.6 billion increase from fiscal year 2010 levels, with an emphasis on ongoing programs in Afghanistan, Pakistan and Iraq, as well as global development programs to provide humanitarian, health and economic assistance around the world.

In a February 1 budget request to the U.S. Congress, Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton said the total request “breaks down to \$16.4 billion for State [Department] operations and \$36.4 billion for foreign assistance.”

The Obama administration's total proposed budget for fiscal year 2011, which begins October 1, reflecting spending for the domestic economy, defense operations, and all other programs, including the State Department, comes to just more than \$3.8 trillion.

For the State Department, “the majority of our proposed increase is dedicated to the critical front-line states of Iraq, Afghanistan and Pakistan, which demand significant and costly attention,” Clinton said.

In Iraq, the U.S. mission is shifting from a military effort run by the Defense Department to civilian-run programs overseen by State and the U.S. Agency for International Development

(USAID), Clinton said. Likewise, Afghanistan and Pakistan are seeing an increase in civilian personnel. In all three countries, Clinton asked for the budget to fund the strengthening of democratic institutions and rule of law, as well as development and infrastructure projects. These efforts, along with improving the quality of life, are also designed to combat the despair that can lead to violent extremism.

The second tier of State Department priorities is to meet global challenges such as disasters, poverty, disease and the effects of climate change.

Clinton said the State Department budget request “does not include additional funding that will be required to address the devastating impact of the earthquake in Haiti,” whose long-term requirements are still being assessed.

Clinton proposed targeted investments in food security, democracy promotion and health, including an expansion of the president’s [global health initiative](#), which addresses challenges such as HIV/AIDS, malaria, maternal and child health and tuberculosis.

Rather than deliver aid services exclusively on its own, she said, the United States “will help countries build their own capacity to deliver services through strong, transparent, accountable institutions.”

The empowerment of women stands at the core of these efforts, she said. “Women are critical to advancing social, economic and political progress. They are also a terrific return on investment: numerous studies have shown that when women receive schooling or the boost of a small loan, they flourish, their children flourish and so does the greater community.”

Deputy Secretary of State Jacob Lew told reporters February 1 that, overall, the proposed budget has remained the same in many areas and has seen reductions in some sections.

“The reality is that international spending has been underfunded for so long that holding the line is in and of itself ... a difficult thing to do,” he said. “I think the real story is that from our perspective, we’ve targeted the investment increases in very strategic areas.”

Along with the increases directed to Iraq, Afghanistan and Pakistan, “we’ve targeted toward the initiatives which we think are key to ... restoring the United States’ role in the world so we can play the kind of constructive leadership role that the president has articulated, and to rebuilding our core capacity.”

Where there have been reductions, such as in counternarcotics operations like the [Merida Initiative](#) in Mexico and Central America, as well as Plan Colombia, which helps that nation fight narcotics trafficking and promotes development, “the reason the number’s coming down is that things are better,” Lew said.

Both programs, he said, have graduated from a stage where more funding was needed to purchase heavy equipment.

“We’ve just completed the purchase of helicopters in Mexico. All the helicopters have been paid for. They’re being delivered. We’re now moving to a different stage of the program. Merida II is a program that’s designed to get at what people do, as opposed to what they use to do the job,” he said. “We’re at a similar point in Plan Colombia.”

Lew said the proposed increase for the global health initiative will help connect various U.S. health programs such as the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR), maternal and child health care and malaria treatment and prevention. The goal is to build a sustainable health care infrastructure, Lew said.

"We're focusing on connecting the programs, so if a woman comes in to a ... clinic that is there because of PEPFAR funding, we can also provide maternal care and care to a newborn child," he said. With broader staff training and health facilities that can be used for multiple purposes, Lew projected that approximately 300,000 pregnancy-related deaths and 3 million early childhood deaths can be prevented.

"This is a whole different way of doing business," Lew said. "We see it as a way to both extend the lifesaving and disease reduction capacity of our federal assistance but also to leave behind a much more stable system."

4. Vice President Biden on Obama's Nuclear Vision (01-29-2010) **January 29 Wall Street Journal commentary**

The following commentary by Vice President Biden, headlined "The President's Nuclear Vision," appeared in the Wall Street Journal January 29 and is in the public domain.

The President's Nuclear Vision

We will spend what is necessary to maintain the safety, security and effectiveness of our weapons.

By Joe Biden

The United States faces no greater threat than the spread of nuclear weapons. That is why, last April in Prague, President Obama laid out a comprehensive agenda to reverse their spread, and to pursue the peace and security of a world without them.

He understands that this ultimate goal will not be reached quickly. But by acting on a number of fronts, we can ensure our security, strengthen the global nonproliferation regime, and keep vulnerable nuclear material out of terrorist hands.

For as long as nuclear weapons are required to defend our country and our allies, we will maintain a safe, secure and effective nuclear arsenal. The president's Prague vision is central to this administration's efforts to protect the American people — and that is why we are increasing investments in our nuclear arsenal and infrastructure in this year's budget and beyond.

Among the many challenges our administration inherited was the slow but steady decline in support for our nuclear stockpile and infrastructure, and for our highly trained nuclear work force. The stockpile, infrastructure and work force played a critical and evolving role in every stage of our nuclear experience, from the Manhattan Project to the present day. Once charged with developing ever more powerful weapons, they have had a new mission in the 18 years since we stopped conducting nuclear tests. That is to maintain the strength of the nuclear arsenal.

For almost a decade, our laboratories and facilities have been underfunded and undervalued. The consequences of this neglect — like the growing shortage of skilled nuclear scientists and engineers and the aging of critical facilities — have largely escaped public notice. Last year, the Strategic

Posture Commission led by former Defense Secretaries William Perry and James Schlesinger warned that our nuclear complex requires urgent attention. We agree.

The budget we will submit to Congress on Monday both reverses this decline and enables us to implement the president's nuclear-security agenda. These goals are intertwined. The same skilled nuclear experts who maintain our arsenal play a key role in guaranteeing our country's security now and for the future. State-of-the art facilities, and highly trained and motivated people, allow us to maintain our arsenal without testing. They will help meet the president's goal of securing vulnerable nuclear materials world-wide in the coming years, and enable us to track and thwart nuclear trafficking, verify weapons reductions, and to develop tomorrow's cutting-edge technologies for our security and prosperity.

To achieve these goals, our budget devotes \$7 billion for maintaining our nuclear-weapons stockpile and complex, and for related efforts. This commitment is \$600 million more than Congress approved last year. And over the next five years we intend to boost funding for these important activities by more than \$5 billion. Even in a time of tough budget decisions, these are investments we must make for our security. We are committed to working with Congress to ensure these budget increases are approved.

This investment is long overdue. It will strengthen our ability to recruit, train and retain the skilled people we need to maintain our nuclear capabilities. It will support the work of our nuclear labs, a national treasure that we must and will sustain. Many of our facilities date back to World War II, and, given the safety and environmental challenges they present, cannot be sustained much longer. Increased funding now will eventually enable considerable savings on both security and maintenance. It also will allow us to clean up and close down production facilities we no longer need.

Our budget request is just one of several closely related and equally important initiatives giving life to the president's Prague agenda. Others include completing the New START agreement with Russia, releasing the Nuclear Posture Review on March 1, holding the Nuclear Security Summit in April, and pursuing ratification and entry into force of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty.

We will by these initiatives seek to strengthen an emerging bipartisan consensus on how best to secure our nation. These steps will strengthen the nonproliferation regime, which is vital to holding nations like North Korea and Iran accountable when they break the rules, and deterring others from trying to do so.

Reflecting this consensus, Sen. John McCain has joined the president in endorsing a world without nuclear weapons — a goal that was articulated by President Ronald Reagan, who in 1984 said these weapons must be “banished from the face of the Earth.” This consensus was inspired by four of our most eminent statesmen – Messrs. Henry Kissinger, William Perry, Sam Nunn and George P. Shultz.

Some critics will argue that we should not constrain our nuclear efforts in any way. Others will assert that retaining a robust deterrent is at odds with our nonproliferation agenda. These four leaders last week in these pages argued compellingly that “maintaining high confidence in our nuclear arsenal is critical as the numbers of these weapons goes down. It is also consistent with and necessary for U.S. leadership in nonproliferation, risk reduction and arms reduction goals.”

This shared commitment serves our security. No nation can secure itself by disarming unilaterally, but as long as nuclear weapons exist, all nations remain ever on the brink of destruction. As

President Obama said in Prague, “We cannot succeed in this endeavor alone, but we can lead it, we can start it.”

5. Clinton Signals Unwavering U.S. Commitment to European Security (01-29-2010)

By Merle David Kellerhals Jr.
Staff Writer

Washington — Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton outlined a set of principles that guide U.S. foreign and security policies with Europe, and also signaled the “unwavering commitment” of the United States to European security in a [speech January 29](#) in Paris.

Speaking at France’s École Militaire, Clinton emphasized that the Vienna-based Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) and NATO, the two largest and most comprehensive security organizations in Europe, are well-suited to deal with the 21st-century security environment and should be the venues for future discussions. At the same time, she said, Russia has offered a variety of proposals about the future of European security that deserve a thoughtful response.

“European security remains an anchor of U.S. foreign and security policy,” Clinton said. “However, we believe that these common goals are best pursued in the context of existing institutions, such as the OSCE and the NATO-Russia Council, rather than by negotiating new treaties, as Russia has suggested.”

In November 2009 Russian President Dmitry Medvedev put forward new ideas on European security, arguing that organizations such as NATO and the OSCE have become outdated.

In a statement on the Russian government’s Web site, the Kremlin said the new European security treaty would be based on the principle that “no nation or international organization ... is entitled to strengthen its own security at the cost of other nations or organizations,” according to a news report by Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty.

The draft European Security Treaty calls for the U.N. Security Council to “bear primary responsibility for maintaining international peace and security.” Russia is one of the council’s five veto-holding, permanent members.

In her Paris speech, Clinton rejected this notion, saying that “we strongly believe that the enlargement of NATO and the [European Union] has increased security, stability and prosperity across the continent and that this, in turn, has increased Russia’s security.”

Clinton was in Paris for consultations with French President Nicolas Sarkozy and his national security adviser, Jean-David Levitte, following two days of meetings with foreign ministers in London on Yemen and Afghanistan. While at the London talks, Clinton held private meetings with British Foreign Secretary David Miliband, French Foreign Minister Bernard Kouchner and Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov, among others.

The speech before a select audience at the 250-year-old military academy in Paris was in part intended to provide Europeans with specific policies and to emphasize continued U.S. commitment to their security. Some in Europe have feared that the United States has become distracted by ongoing conflicts in the Middle East and south-central Asia.

But Clinton told the audience that the traditional definition of security as deterrence, which dominated Cold War thinking and policymaking, has become largely obsolete. While security policy still embraces arms control, territorial sovereignty, and accords against the use of force, it must now consider threats from non-state actors, terrorism, cyberattacks and natural disasters, she added.

Clinton emphasized that the United States objects “to any spheres of influence in Europe in which one country seeks to control another’s future,” adding that “NATO must and will remain open to any country that aspires to become a member and can meet the requirements of membership.” Both Georgia and Ukraine have sought NATO membership in recent years.

In the 21st-century threat environment, security cannot be taken for granted, and Euro-Atlantic nations should avoid becoming complacent, Clinton said, citing the August 2008 Russia-Georgia crisis over the breakaway provinces of South Ossetia and Abkhazia. Russia has since recognized both provinces as newly independent states and has maintained military forces in both provinces, but the United States and European nations have rejected that claim as a violation of the sovereignty of Georgia. Clinton said the [United States will not recognize the Georgian regions](#) of South Ossetia and Abkhazia as independent states. Russian forces continue to occupy both regions despite agreeing in a ceasefire commitment to withdraw its troops to positions held before the August conflict.

Clinton said part of the U.S. security commitment to Europe is Article 5 of the North Atlantic Charter, which commits its members to the security of any NATO nation attacked by outside powers.

“An attack on one is an attack on all,” Clinton said, reiterating that the United States will maintain military forces in Europe to bolster security.

SECURITY PRINCIPLES

Clinton addressed six security principles that guide U.S. policies in Europe, which specify:

- The cornerstone of security in Europe is a commitment to the sovereignty and territorial integrity of all states.
- The United States is committed to the collective defense of allies.
- True security requires security for individuals as well as security among states and respect for human rights, free expression and a free news media.
- There should be transparency in all relations to blunt decades of mistrust.
- Security is indivisible, which effectively means there cannot be security for some without security for all.
- People everywhere have the right to live free from the fear of nuclear destruction.

6. Fact Sheet: Secretary Clinton's Speech on European Security (01-29-2010)
Outlines U.S. principles to strengthen, extend security in Europe

The Secretary of State's Speech on European Security

In a speech today at L'Ecole Militaire in Paris, Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton emphasized that the United States and Europe are essential partners in meeting today's global challenges, and stressed that we are eager to strengthen cooperation with a Europe that is strong and unified. Today, thanks to the partnership between our nation and many others, Europe is more secure than ever before. But much important work remains unfinished. We welcome the new thinking on European security that is underway on both sides of the Atlantic. As we work with our partners to strengthen and extend security in Europe, we will do so on a firm foundation of core principles. These principles include:

- Dedication to the Sovereignty and Territorial Integrity of all States. The United States must and will remain vigilant in our efforts to oppose any attempt to undermine the right of all countries to pursue their own foreign policies, choose their own allies, and provide for their own defense. The United States strongly objects to any spheres of influence in which one country seeks to control another's future.
- Recognition that Security in Europe Must be Indivisible. The security of all nations is intertwined. We must work together to enhance each other's security, in part by engaging with each other on new ideas and approaches. We want to work together with Russia to reaffirm the principles of the Helsinki Final Act and the NATO-Russia Founding Act. The United States is proud of what our two countries have accomplished together during the past year. We will continue to build a more substantive and constructive relationship based on our mutual interests.
- Unwavering Devotion to the Collective Defense and Security of NATO Allies. This pledge is enshrined in the NATO treaty's Article 5, wherein an attack on one is an attack on all. The United States is working with our Allies to develop contingency plans for responding to new and evolving threats. We are engaged in productive discussions with European allies about their potential participation in the new missile defense architecture. We are also exploring ways to cooperate with Russia in ways that enhance the security of all of Europe, including Russia.
- Commitment to Practicing Transparency in Our Dealings with Europe. To keep Europe safe, we must keep the channels of communication open by being forthright about our policies and approaches. The United States supports a more open exchange of military data, including visits to military sites. The Conventional Armed Forces in Europe Treaty also needs our attention. Our goal should be a modern security framework that strengthens the principles of territorial integrity, non-first use of force, transparency, and the right of host countries to approve the stationing of troops in their territory.
- Belief that People Everywhere Have the Right to Live Free from the Fear of Nuclear Destruction. President Obama has declared a goal of ridding the world of nuclear weapons. As long as nuclear weapons exist, we will retain a safe, secure, and effective deterrent to protect us and our allies. The United States and Russia are close to concluding a new START treaty to reduce our strategic nuclear arsenals. The United States will also chart the future of its nuclear forces in the Nuclear Posture Review, host a Nuclear Security Summit to address the risk of unsecured nuclear material, seek to strengthen the Nuclear

Nonproliferation Treaty, pursue negotiations on a Fissile Material Cutoff Treaty, and move toward ratifying the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty.

- Recognition that True Security Entails Not Only Peaceful Relations among States, but Opportunities and Rights for the Individuals Who Live Within Them. Governments must promote and defend the human rights of their citizens so that all can live in dignity, free from fear of violence or oppression. The United States and Europe are acting together to expand opportunity, advance democracy, and protect human dignity around the world. The United States seeks to partner with and strengthen institutions to broaden the respect for human rights, to end the scourge of human trafficking across Europe, and to reach out to marginalized groups.
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7. United States Condemns Unjust Executions of Iranian Dissenters (01-29-2010)

By Stephen Kaufman
Staff Writer

Washington — The Obama administration says Iran's execution of two Iranians who were accused of being involved in protests following the country's June 12, 2009, presidential election is "unjust" and marks a "low point" in the government's crackdown against people's peaceful exercise of their rights to free speech and free assembly.

Speaking to reporters January 28, White House deputy press secretary Bill Burton said the United States "strongly condemns these unjust executions."

According to press reports, Mohammad Reza Ali Zamani and Arash Rahmanipour were executed by hanging January 28, the first reported executions of political dissidents since the post-election protests began.

"We see it as a low point in the Islamic Republic's unjust and ruthless crackdown of peaceful dissent," Burton said. "Murdering political prisoners who are exercising their universal rights will not bring the respect and legitimacy the Islamic Republic seeks. It will only serve to further isolate Iran's government in the world and from its people."

The State Department's assistant secretary for public affairs, P.J. Crowley, said January 28 that it is "unclear that these individuals had anything to do with the turmoil surrounding the elections," and described the executions as "another sign of the increasingly ruthless repression and attempts at intimidation" by the Iranian government.

Iranian authorities are sending "the wrong signals" to their people, Crowley said. "Iranian citizens have the same right that all citizens have to demonstrate peacefully, to participate in the political process."

Although the Obama administration remains willing to engage with Iran's government in hopes that the country will play a constructive role in the Middle East, it will also "continue to speak out on Iran regarding their relation with their people and what we see as serious human rights concerns and abuses."

"We want to see Iran have a different kind of relationship with its own people," Crowley said.

Speaking in London, Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton told Cable News Network January 28 that “the voices of protest, the voices of opposition, are going to continue to challenge this regime in Iran.”

The Iranian leadership has apparently failed its people as well as “the very principles that they claim to govern by,” Clinton said.

The resolution of Iran’s political crisis remains “an internal societal matter for Iranians to decide.” The outside world is not involved in the crisis, Clinton said. But the international community is actively concerned over the Iranian government’s nuclear activities and is discussing potential sanctions. Iran has continued to violate its international obligations on the matter, and has not formally responded to an October 2009 offer by China, Russia, France, the United Kingdom, the United States and Germany that would allow it to enrich its uranium in another country for use in its Tehran medical research reactor.

“Absent a nuclear program, we would still be expressing our regrets and our condemnation of their behavior toward their citizens, but we would not be looking for sanctions. We are looking for sanctions because their nuclear ambitions threaten the rest of the world,” Clinton said.

The United States and other countries are “beginning to share ideas” on the design and enforcement of sanctions that will be “tough and clearly aimed at the Iranian economy,” she said, adding that “it is very much our agenda to move forward.”

With little evidence that Iran is willing to engage over its nuclear program, the international community “does not have a choice,” she said. The United States remains open to pursuing a diplomatic track, but believes it is “imperative to change the calculus” of Iran’s leadership, and sanctions are “an appropriate way to proceed,” Clinton said.

“The time has come for the international community to say, ‘No, we cannot permit your continued pursuit of nuclear weapons. It is destabilizing, it is dangerous, and we’re going to take a stand against you,’” she said.

In the meantime, the U.S. Senate passed a bill that would require unilateral U.S. sanctions against Iran because of its continued nuclear activities. The measure, approved January 28, is similar to a bill passed by the U.S. House of Representatives in December. It would restrict Iranian imports of refined petroleum products, broadly ban imports and exports between the United States and Iran with the exception of food and medicine, and require any assets in the United States from groups such as Iran’s Revolutionary Guard to be frozen.

The House and Senate must reconcile their versions in a conference committee before a final bill can be submitted to both chambers for approval.
